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**Fresno Chaffee Zoo Announces Centennial Campaign with Transformational Lead Gift**

*Fresno, CA*-The Fresno Chaffee Zoo announced its Centennial Campaign with a seven-figure pledge from local casino owner, Zoo board chair and animal welfare advocate, Kyle Kirkland. Nationally renowned and locally beloved, the Fresno Chaffee Zoo celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2029, and the Zoo's masterplan calls for a significant investment in exhibits and infrastructure upgrades over the next decade. Mr. Kirkland's gift, the largest individual gift in the Zoo's history, is an exciting start to the Campaign.

With community support through Measure Z, the Zoo has emerged over the last two decades as a highly respected zoological institution with world-class exhibits, acclaimed conservation efforts, educational opportunities, and well-attended special events such as this year's popular Zoo Boo, IllumiNature, and Butterfly Garden. The Zoo's recently announced masterplan is a transformative effort to enhance the Zoo's position as a

must-see destination with exciting new exhibits of regional flora and fauna, improved parking and support facilities, and additional place-based education and entertainment venues.

Jon Forrest Dohlin, Chief Executive Officer and Zoo Director stated, "In June 2022, voters in Fresno County reaffirmed their desire for a world-class Zoo by approving Measure Z with an unprecedented 83% approval vote. Two decades of Measure Z funding has allowed the Fresno Chaffee Zoo to evolve from an outdated city zoo to a respected, AZA-accredited zoological institution, envied for its award-winning exhibits, highly effective conservation efforts, and diverse and talented staff. Our Centennial Campaign will supplement community support with philanthropic giving to protect the community's investment, fund our ambitious masterplan and build an education endowment for future generations. We deeply appreciate Mr. Kirkland's investment in the Zoo and our community's future."

Terry Skoda, Chief Advancement Officer at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo agreed, and said, "Mr. Kirkland's support for the Zoo's endowment is an inspiring first step in our Centennial Campaign. Our mission to transform the Zoo into a breathtaking, can't-miss regional destination will require philanthropic support to build on the community's investment in the Zoo. In our opinion, the community has shown its selfless support for the Zoo by passing Measure Z. It is our profound responsibility to ensure that the community's investment is protected and enhanced by this fundraising effort for future generations of Zoo attendees."

Kirkland added, "My family's gift today demonstrates our strong belief in the Zoo's mission and leadership, its position as a premier Central Valley destination and source of community pride, and our deep appreciation of the community's ongoing support for our care for animals through Measure Z. We hope other donors will follow our lead in the Centennial Campaign and invest in the Jewel of the Central Valley."

To learn more about the Campaign and lend your support, please contact the Fresno Chaffee Zoo Advancement Office at (559) 492-4433 and [tskoda@fresnochaffeezoo.org](mailto:tskoda@fresnochaffeezoo.org).

**About Fresno Chaffee Zoo:** Centrally located in Fresno, California, Fresno Chaffee Zoo is a 39-acre Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoo. It is home to over 200 different species and features WOW experiences—from Sea Lion Cove to African Adventure—that teach guests about animals from across the globe and the conservation efforts to protect them. The Zoo welcomes over 800,000 guests annually, offering a world-class guest experience and conservation education to all who visit. The mission of Fresno Chaffee Zoo is to inspire people to care for animals, create connections, build community and save wildlife.